

A

MODERATE

SHORT

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

Tenderness of Conscience.

---

By JOHN BRADSHAW Rector of Ettringham in Sussex.

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*Abr 10. 14. Not so Lord.*

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*Felix Conscientia, in qua misericordia & veritas obviaverunt sibi,  
justitia & pax osculate sunt. St. Bern. de interiori domo.*

---

*Ego nec tumultum  
Nec mori per vim metuam, Te habente  
Carole terras. Hor. Car. lib. 3. od. 14.*

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L O N D O N ,

Printed by John Best for Andrew Crook at the Green Dragon in Saint Pauls Church-yard. 1662.



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**P**Erlegi hanc tractatum de Tenera Conscientia in  
quonihil reperio aut sanæ doctrinæ aut bonis mo-  
ribus conterarium quo minus Imprimatur.

*In editio Lamberhanus  
Mart. 26. 1663.*

Dan. Nicols R. P. D.  
Arch. Cant. Capel.  
Domesticus.

---

**A**Men qui dicitur, qui Alpha  
& Omega, quaerentibus qui  
via est, credentibus veritas, viventi-  
bus vita, inutilem me servum suum  
dirigat ne errem extra viam, regat ne  
agam contra veritatem, erigat ne ca-  
dam infra vitam, Amen.

# THE P R E F A C E.

**A**ving provided upon that dark  
and gloomy day Januar. 30. last,  
some meditations uppon that scripture 1 Sam. 24. 5. After I had  
shewed how a self-smiting heart,  
or a tender conscience is ever most tender of of-  
fering the least injury to the Lorde Anointed and  
how much the implacable enemies of his late  
Majesty of ever glorious memory had done off  
from him, I thought it might be no ill office to any,  
but possibly serviceable to the desires of many  
who have desired to be acquainted with the  
meaning of that, to which so stayn for many  
years have pretended, if I took a brief Survey of  
a self-smiting heart or tenderness of conscience  
in general. The subject is purely Theological,  
and therefore not unsuitable to a Church mans  
search : nor know I of any, either at home or  
abroad, that have written professedly and direct-  
ly of that subject. I handle it only as their a  
simplex ; not taking upon me to define how  
far our governours may or may not bear with, or  
yield to tender, dubious, or scrupulous conscienc-

## The Preface.

ces. I have ever been very tender and wary of dealing in any state affairs, whether purely political, or mixt, as partly theological, partly political. I leave that to the Higher powers, only begging of God to guide them in all things for the best. Four things I have aim'd at, and endeavour'd in this discourse: First truth, that I may not deceive: Secondly clearness, that I may not confound: Thirdly moderation, that I may not offend: Fourthly brevity, that I may not tire. Blessed be the King of Kings, that hath not only restored us our King again, but a King so gracious, so earnestly and constantly desirous of the well-fare of the souls, consciences, and external prosperity of his people. God give to all his people hearts to make a dutiful and grateful return of Love, Loyalty, and Obedience, Amen.

Item fides, &c pax, & honor pudorque  
Priscus, & neglecta redire virtus  
Audet, &c. Hor.carm.secus.

## Errata.

P. 1. l. 15. r. expressing, p. 3. l. 15. r. cold, p. 4. in mar. r. as, p. 4.  
l. 18. r. plainnes, p. 4. in mar. r. audeo dicere, p. 6. l. 14. r. ve-  
getative, p. 6. l. 26. r. intentions, p. 6. l. 28. r. intention, p. 11. in  
mar. r. ponderant, p. 16. l. 32. r. expected, p. 16. in mar. r. 1. 2.  
p. 17. l. 3. r. and knows, p. 19. in mar. r. vel, p. 21. l. 11. r. in our  
callings.

OF  
TENDERNESS  
OF  
Conscience.

CHAP. I.



However the phrase or (a) expression of tenderness of Conscience, is not to be found in Holy Scripture, *totidem verbius*, yet the thing itself is both in precepts and examples. In \* precepts 1 Tim. 3. 9. holding the mystery of faith in a pure Conscience. 1 Thes. 5. 22. abstain from all appearance of evil, or (as it may be read) from all kind of evil. Besides these and many other precepts, we have † examples many: Of David 1 Sam. 24. 5. troubled for cutting of his Sovereigns Skirt; of Paul Act. 23. 1. and Act. 24. 16. and elsewhere. Other examples there are, which for brevity I pretermitt. That of Josiah usually alledged, is not so clearly pertinent 2 Chron. 34. 27. the tenderness of his heart expressing it self in humiliation.

2. Tenderness of Conscience, or a tender Conscience, is a gracious mean betwixt a scrupulous Conscience on the right hand, and a wide, sluggish or seared Conscience on the left hand; whereby we are quickly and deeply sensible of having done, and *marry* of doing any evil God hath clearly forbidden, or of

(a) Taken from the most tender parts of the body, as the eye, &c or from some part newly healed.

\* Tim. 5. 22. keep thy self pure, *Eccles. 9. 2.* as he that feareth an oath.

† Gen. 44. 17. God forbid I should do so, 2 Sam. 24. 10. Davids heart smote him, 1 Chro. 11. 19<sup>th</sup> my God forbid it me that I should do this thing.

omitting any good he hath clearly commanded.

3. A mean or mediocrity is that which lies betwix two extremes, and is ordinarily twofold : (a) 1. Of Participation, so a gray colour is a mean betwixt black and white, as partaking of both. 2. Of Abnegation, so moral virtues are a mean betwixt two vicious extremes, as denying to share with either, but rather exceeding from, and opposing both. The former I may not unfiely term, (b) Medium compositionis ; the latter Medium oppositionis.

(a) Medium per participacionem, seu secundum formam per negationem utriusque extremi seu per privationem Jandunus.

(b) Medium compositionis vel oppositionis.

4. These means are of several sorts, Natural, Artificial and Moral. Not to speak of the 2. former, a Moral mean is twofold, 1. A Virtue, 2. A thing Indifferent. A Virtue is a medium, whose two extremes (c) are both evil. A thing Indifferent, whose two extremes are one evil, the other good in general.

(c) Ή δὲ τέλος καὶ μέσον τοῦ περιεχούντος, καὶ οὐ καλόν οὐδὲ πονηρόν τινα περιεχεῖται, &c. Arist.t. Ethic. lib. 2. c. 6.

5. All moral virtues, however for their quality they are an *aptina*, and for their degree, yet as to their essence they are (d) a *modus*. Thus valour lies betwixt rash venturousness on one hand, and cowardise on

the other ; liberality betwixt prodigality and covetousness, magnificence betwixt wast and parsimony, magnanimity betwixt (e) pride and pusillanimity, modesty betwixt ambition and contempt of honour, meekness betwixt wrath and over much lenitude or sheepishness, &c.

(d) Τὸς μὲν ἕνεκεν τοῦ περιεχούντος, συντελεῖται τὸ μέσον, τὸν τελονομοῦσαν, αἴτιον τοῦ μεσοῦ, ibid.

(e) Rebus avarugustis animo-  
sus atque fortis apparet, sapienter idem, contrahens vento nimium secundo, turgida-  
vela, Hor.

6. As it is in Moral virtues, so it is in Christian graces, they are seated between two extremes, which mean betwixt letting the hair grow at full length, and shaving it quite off. So Exod. 44. 20. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long, they shall only poll their heads, spoken of the Jewish Priests.

yet

yet are not only by defect and excess, but by a contrary deviation also from a just intermediate rectitude. Deut. 5. 32. you shall observe to do what the Lord your God hath commanded you ; you shall not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left. Mat. 7. 14.

Strait is the gate, and (a) narrow is the way.

(a) 'Psalms

*Contribution* for sin is a mean 'twixt hardness and no μη το άπο-  
sorrow, 1 Cor. 5. 2. on one hand, and being over-  
whelmed with over much sorrow on the other, 2 Cor. 2. πεν, χαλεπός  
7. *Justifying faith* is a mean betwixt works, as pre-  
tending to justification on one side, and a dead faith  
void of works on the other. *Hope* is seated 'twixt  
desperation and presumption; *Charity* 'twixt jealousy,  
rash suspicion on one side, and blind affection on the  
other; *Zeal* 'twixt a ~~zeal~~ or (which is worse) a  
lukewarm temper on this side, and a phrenetical fu-  
rious distemper on that side; *Temperance* is a keeping  
the body in subjection between pining and pinching  
on one part, and glutting and pampering it on the  
other. *Timothy* being infirm was advised to drink  
no longer water, but a little wine for his stomachs  
sake and his often infirmities, 1 Tim. 5. 23. And  
*Amnon* had done well (of whom we read 2 Sam. 12.  
28) if he had drunk no longer wine, but a little wa-  
ter for his souls sake and filthy lustfulness. *Patience*  
is betwixt repining and raging on the left hand, and  
a stupified senslessness on the right. *Self denial* 'twixt  
self love, resolving to lose nothing though God call  
for it; and self neglect or injury, in giving up all  
when we need not, as in the *vow* of poverty. *Spiri-*  
*tual joy* 'twixt a drooping heavy spirit, and a carnal  
wanton profuse joy.

The fear of God is a narrow path, between a  
(b) slavish fear on one side, and a want of all fear  
on the other; between the spirit of bondage, Rom. 8.

*licet bonum facit non tamen bene facit. Sanctus Aug. de spir. & litera. Nemo invi-*  
*tus bene facit, etiam si bonum est quod facit, invenit facit qui solo timore facit,*  
*lib. confess. 1. c. 12.*

τυχόν το μον-  
ά το έπιμ-  
χειρ. Aristot.  
ubi supra, sed  
tendit in ardua  
virtus. Ovid.

cold

Sicut inter a-  
quam, &  
ignem tenenda  
est via, ut nec  
exuratur homo  
neos demerga-  
tur; ita inter  
apicem vici-  
orū in excesso  
& inter vor-  
ginem eorum-  
dem in defecto,  
iter nigrum,  
temperare de-  
bemus ne vel  
ad dextram vel  
sinistram decli-  
nemus Augu-  
stin.

(b) Qui solo  
timore facit  
quid jubetur

*Heb. 2.* where love hath not predominion above fear and fearlessness, where fear hath not predominion above security.

7. As Christian graces, so Christian duties are fenced within the same narrow path. (a) To come without preparation to them, is to offer indignity to them; to spend over much time in it, is to encroach upon them. In bearing, we walk upon a narrow bridge, and must take heed how we bear; for we must neither superciliously or irreverently hear, because it is (b) God that speaks by man; nor must we blindly and carelessly swallow all we hear, because it is but Man by whom God speaks. In the duty of Preaching, we are neither on one hand, so to Preach the law and damnation as to drive men to desperation; nor on the other, so to manage the Gospel and the sweet promises, as to draw them to presumption: we must speak as the oracles of God, and yet use plainest minister milk, and yet strong meat. In reception of the Lords Supper I must strike a middle path, betwixt profane irreverence and superstitious adoration. (c) In giving alms I must pass between the right hand and the left. (d) Non so miseat conscientia tua laudis humana appetitus cum in eleemosyna facienda et vinum praeceptum contendis implere. Aug.

(a) Before thou prayest prepare thy self, and be not one that tempteth the Lord, *Eccles.* 18. 23.  
 15. (b) *Luk.* 10. 16. Non sum propheta, non sum Apostolus; & prophet & apostoli (audio dicere) vice fungor: & quibus non aequaliter morisit, corum implicitor curis, *Bein.* super Cantic. Sam. 42.  
 (c) *Non* so miseat conscientia tua laudis humana appetitus cum in eleemosyna facienda et vinum praeceptum contendis implere. Aug.

Disputes and controversies are the Churches' convulsion fits.

*Auream quisquis mediocriteratem diligit, autem, &c. Hor. lib. 2. od. 10.]*

8. To him that impartially & diligently searches into the most dark and difficult disputes, that do at this day trouble the Church, it will I think be apparent, that the truth lies in a mean betwixt two unsafe extremes. This I humbly conceive might be made appear in the difficulties concerning Gods infallible foresight, and yet his permission of what is not pleasing to him. We need neither deny or impair Gods purity or holiness, nor yet his providence; neither the freedome of his grace, nor yet that freedome of will which is necessary to a rational creature. The same may be said of the controversies concerning unbelief, perfection in this life, the virtue and efficacy of the Sacraments,

original

*original sin, Christs mediation, Gods justification of a sinner, assurance of salvation, perseverance in grace, the Lords day, and all the disputes about worship and discipline.* The middle path in all which and several others, though as to my private satisfaction I have tracted in some measure, yet here I must not do it, having already been too large upon the genus of a tender Conscience, contrary to the rules of short and positive discourses; only my intire love to moderation (of which I crave pardon, if it keep not a mean also) hath drawn me out so far, nor can I pass from it, till I have observed one thing more, viz.

Tene medium,  
si non vis per-  
dere modum,  
locus medium  
tutus est, me-  
dium sedes mo-  
di, & modus  
virtue, Bern.  
3. cap. 10.

9. That amongst all those several ways of Christian Religion (ob that there were but one way, though upon condition I forfeited and lost my life as often as there are several ways) that seems the truest that stands in the middle betwixt what is idolatrous and what profane, what is *soylis* and *superstitious*, and what is naked and rude; holding to the Scriptures against the one, and to judgement and practice of venerable antiquity, where the Scriptures are dark, against the other. And for this, view one of the pearls that dropt from the rich Pen of our late dear and dread Sovereign King Charles the Martyr, in his ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ, a book so excellent for Wisdom, Judgment, Piety, Charity, Elegancy, that it is worthy to be in the Hands, Head, and Heart of all Christians; In his Farewell Letter to the Prince of Wales, now our Gracious King, speaking of the Religion establisht in the Church of England, his Majesty gives it this Elogium.

Sancta ecclesia  
consistit unita-  
te fidelium,  
scis corpus uni-  
tate membro-  
rum, Gregor.  
Mor. lib. 29.

Nodis relus  
longius erum-  
est, Senec.  
Trag. in  
Agamem.

I have tryed it, and after much search and many disputes, have concluded it to be the best in the world, not only in the community as Christian, but also in the special notion as reformed, keeping the middle way between the pomp of Superstition;

ons Tyranny, and the meanness of Phantastick  
Anarchy.

Kings standing higher, see farther then other men  
in matters of Church and State.

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C H A P. II.

*Virtutibus ho-  
mo disponit  
ad actiones  
suis quatenus a  
rationis move-  
tur, donis vero  
quatenus mo-  
retur a Deo,*  
Aquinas.  
*Virtus theolo-  
gica.*

*Possunt aliqua  
bona fieri non  
beneficentibus  
a quibus sunt,  
August. contra  
Julian.  
Hypocrita sunt  
simulatores  
mali adjun-  
gentes se ficta  
charitate cap-  
taentes omnes  
motus omnia  
verba sancto-  
rum, in omni-  
bus iaqueos  
inquirentes.  
St. Aug. in  
Psal. 40.*

Mat. 12. 20.

I. His tenderness of Conscience is a gracious mean, which distinguishes it from a bare mortal virtue: For however there is a Conscience in every man, as having the law of nature in his heart, so that a mere natural man or Heathen, may have some kind of tenderness of Conscience; yet here I speak of it as it is a Christian virtue, and therefore call it a gracious mean.

2. Christian graces do eminently contain under them all moral virtues, as the reasonable soul contains the sensitive and vegetative. Moral virtues being also as the stock, and graces as the grafts: for as the stock may bring forth fruit, yet bare, not pleasing, sower, not acceptable till it be grafted; so a moral man may bring forth much fruit, yet not pleasing to God, till grace be grafted on him.

3. Therefore that tenderness which an hypocrite or carnal man pretends to, is not true tenderness, nor pleasing to God: Yea the more tender such a person makes himself, the more scared is his conscience through hypocrisy. Absalom 2 Sam. 15. 6. pretended much tenderness about his vow in Hebron, when his intentions were to dethrone his father. The graceless Pharisees did pretend a tenderness of the Sabbath, but their intentions was to accuse our Saviour.

4. Whence it follows, that the more sound and well grown grace is in the heart, the more tender is the conscience;

conscience; and contrariwise the less grace, the less true tenderness. And for a graceless person to pretend to it, is as absurd as for a Dwarf to pretend to stature, or a lame man to agility.

5. This therefore being a gracious disposition, must necessarily have God for the Author, or efficient cause, which I did not explicitly lay down in the definition, as supposing that it is sufficiently understood in the Genus: *James 1. 17.* Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the father of lights, &c. *Dicendum quod Deus operatur in voluntate & natura sicut causa prima in secundis,* Aquin. in *Distinct. 24. lib. 2.*

6. The final cause also may here be taken in, which is to keep us from sinning against him. The conscience being Gods Commissioner in the soul, to examine what we do, keeping therein a petty Sessions, whereby preparation is made for the great Assize. The tender conscience is a faithful judge, the scrupulous conscience a foolish, the wide, feared conscience a corrupt bribed judge. If *natura nil agit frustra*, much less the God of nature, who hath put this principle of nature into the soul of man.

*Qui quid sanctum cogitat eris  
Dei munus est,  
Dei inspiratio,  
Dei gratia,  
Ambr. de Abel  
& Cain cap.  
ult.*

*Jer. 32. 40.  
Panam semper  
ante oculos ver-  
sari putans, qui  
peccaverunt.  
Cicer. pro mil-  
lone.  
Nudabitur pe-  
ctoris mei con-  
scientia, &  
aperto corde vi-  
debuntur litera  
peccatorum,  
Orig. hom. 12*

### C H A P. III.

#### Of the right hand extream, viz a scrupulous conscience.

**S**crupulous is a diminutive of *scrupus*, which is a little sharp piece of a stone; from whence some-what foreedly some would have a scrupulous conscience so called, because as a small stone in the shoe causes a man to go in pain, so a scruple in the conscience is irk-some to him that acts and scruples at what he acts.

*Scrupulus di-  
minutivum à  
scrupus propriè  
est lapillus bre-  
vis & affer  
qui in calceo  
latens plerun-*

*que nos ludit, nam pressus pede sollicititudinem creat* Altenst. vocab.

Buc.

*Dubia plus tor-  
quent mala,  
Sen. Trag. in  
Agamem.*

*Res media di-  
centur, que  
per se sive ex  
juncturā sim-  
pliciter affi-  
mata, nec bona  
nec male sunt  
ut esca, & po-  
tus, & familia.  
Beza epist. ad  
peregrinatum  
in Anglia ec-  
clesiarum fra-  
ters.*

To scruple to  
set our foot  
cross over a  
straw in the  
high way for  
fear of making  
the figure of  
the Cross.

*Eo demum re-  
niet, ut super  
transversam  
(qd dicitur)  
festucam inci-  
dere nefas dicat  
Calv. Instit.  
lib. 3. c. 19.  
Sect. 7.*

But more probably it seems so termed from *scrupulus*, which is one of the least weights, because such a conscience stumbles at things of the least weight or moment, not worth our while to trouble our thoughts with it.

2. A scrupulous conscience is that which sticks at small and trivial things, upon small and trivial reasons.

3. I call those things small and trivial, which are in their own nature merely indifferent; or if they have some degree of evil or good, are not discovered so to be in a clear way to him that scruples at them; in which regard if not in themselves, yet as to him they are trivial.

4. Those reasons or arguments I call trivial, which in the judgement of common reason (not clouded with passion) together with common illumination, have no force or strength in them.

5. Common reason is that which every man is endowed with, who is *compos mentis*, and *grown up to* years of discretion; and that common illumination, which every Christian is endowed with, who may be thought fit to partake of the *Lords Supper*, as to matter of knowledge.

6. Instances of a scrupulous conscience many may be given; these few may serve for a taste. To scruple in *extream thirst* to *drink in that cup*, which another hath drunk in to excess; to scruple to go a mile to the Church on the Sabbath, because there is labour in it. To stick at *eating fish* on a *fasting day*; because some refuse to eat flesh on that day; to stick at uncovering the head or *bowing the knee to a superior*, because we give such worship to God.

In like manner for a *candidat* or *inceptor* to scruple at putting on, suppose, a *Master of Arts Cap, Gown, Hood or Habit*, because some such like habiliments were in use before the Reformation; nor can I think that many of the *Presbyterian way*, do really scruple at

at a white garment in Divine Service : for if there were any colour of sin in a colour ( which in truth there is not ) red should have more of sin in it than white, to which the deepest died sins are compared, Isa. 1. 18. Rev. 17. 3. Justification being compared to the whiteness of wool and snow ; and sanctification to linnen pure and white, Rev. 19. 8.

Yet the chief and leading men of that way, did at certain times in the sight of many thousands, wear *Scarlet Gowns* and *Hoods* in the Universities, not only at *Disputations* and *Congregations*, but at *sermons*, yea ( if I mistake not ) did preach ad Clerum in their *scarlet Copes*, one of the gravest habits in the world, and much used in one of the Universities at solem times. Wherein a man may wonder, as why they should not scruple as much at *scarlet* as at *white* ; so much more, why they should stumble more at *white* of *linnen*, then at the *white* of *miniver* wherewith that habit is largely indorsed.

Of *School-writers*, none that I know speaks more to the purpose then *Antoninus*, from whom some Modern Writers seem to borrow that little that they have upon that subject. First he shews the several names given to scrupulosity : some call it ( says he ) *pusillanimity*, some fear of conscience, some an erroneous conscience ; and gives this definition. *Est vacillatio quedam consurgens cum formidine ex aliquibus conjecturis debilibus & incertis.* i. e. A wavering of mind rising in us, with fear upon some uncertain and weak conjectures.

He after distinguishes betwixt *fides*, *scientia*, *opinio*, Secundum Al-dubitatio, and *scrupulus* ; and tells us that a doubting conscience, is pendulous betwixt both parts ; but a scrupulous fastens upon one part drawn by weak reasons. I see but little difference betwixt *vacillatio* scientiam, f- and *dubitatio*, nor is it necessary either to conceive of dem, opinio-nem, dubita-

*tionem*, & *scrupulum* seu *suspicionem* — Demum *scrupulus ex levibus con-jeturis seu mediis*, & *multum debilis moretur ad unam partem*, ibid.

a dubious conscience as not fasting, because when it doth so it may be doubting, nor doth a scrupulous conscience seem always to close with one precept. Having after laid down the effects of scrupulosity, he proceeds to the causes, viz. melancholy hurting the brain; temptation from Satan stirring up the melancholy humors, and he produces Avicenna so teaching; sometimes overmuch fasting and watching, sometimes the society of scrupulous persons, one being apt to possess another with scruples. (a) Next he proceeds to the remedies of it: As 1. That they should not be over harshly reproved: he should have added (b) except the scruple be dangerous to Church or State. 2. That they should be persuaded to lay it aside. 3. (c) Diligently search the Scriptures, Jam. 1. If any man lack wisdome, &c. 4. By Godly sorrow to prepare for the receiving the grace of God. 5. By subiecting their understanding and judgments to their superiors in wisdom and office, Prov. 3. Lean not to thine own understanding: He cites to this purpose the words of the learned Chancellour of Paris, *Unum vocem damus generale documentum*, viz. facile, credere sapientium & bonorum iudicio, & contra communes eorum sententias non leviter sibi formare scrupulos anxious & timidos.

(a) Non debent scrupulosi durè corr. p. sed animari ad depo- nendum pusillanimitatem & scrupulum.  
 (b) Of which danger our governours are Judges.  
 (c) Debita ad gratiam Dei preparatio, Sollicita sacra Scriptura in dagatio: orationis devosa continua: o opinionis ali- eius tutæ elec- tio: obedi- tiae humili- imitatio: scrupulorum ani- mosa abieccio, discreta præceptorum interpretatio.

but

but as God, in whose stead he is ; thus far *Antonine*  
*Arch-bishop of Florence.*

8. By what he writes, or others from him, themselves, or others, it is manifest there is such a thing as a scrupulous conscience ; that this conscience is anxious, and no doubt in some degree dubious, there being little difference betwixt *dubitatio* & *vacillatio* ; that this scrupulosity is a sin in whomsoever it is, as proceeding from evil causes, viz. ignorance, error, or instability of mind, or pride, some affecting and professing scrupulosity. For by this they make that to be sin, which else had been none ; *faciunt sibi peccata*, 35. 4.  
*ubi non sunt peccata*, says one, It proceeds also from other ill causes aforesaid.

9. There is a kind or rather show of conscience, which some call a perverse or preposterous conscience ; such was that of the Pharisees *Mat. 23. 23.* who paid tithes of *mint, annis, &c.* and neglected, &c. who strained at a *Cnat* and swallowed a *Camel*, *Mat. 23. 24.* Or to give a more modern, and too well known an instance, to be so narrow throated as to strain at the *Churches Prayers*, and to be so wide throated as to swallow the *Churches Lands* ; to scruple to give a penny to the building or repairing of a *Church*, a thing laudable, pious, and necessary, and to stick at no cost towards the dethroning and destroying of their Sovereign, a thing unnatural and impious. But this being but an hypocritical pretense of conscience, cannot be referred to this head, which treats of real scrupulosity.

Say to them  
that are of a  
fearful heart  
be strong, *Isa.*  
35. 4.

*Dicit de temp. -*  
*Conscientia*  
*mala est con-*  
*scientia per-*  
*versa, quam*  
*habent qui pec-*  
*cata parva*  
*ponderant, ma-*  
*gnanorum corante*  
*minima obser-*  
*vatis, maxima*  
*concernit.*  
*Aug. quest.*  
*evang. lib. 1.*  
*qu. 35.*

## C H A P. IV.

Of the left hand extream, viz. a wide,  
loose, and seared conscience.

*Conscientia di-  
lata quam  
habent illi qui  
non ponderant  
crassiora pecca-  
ta. & de com-  
munitibus non  
curant. Disc.  
de temp. Ser. 9.*

*Rom. 13. wrath  
and conscience  
are distin-  
guish't.*

1. **A** Wide or loose Conscience, is that which is not tenderly sensible of having done, nor tenderly wary of doing what is clearly and manifestly evil, out of an inward principle.

2. If a man forbear evil to be done, or is troubled for evil done, only because it is *punish'd* or *punishable* by *humane laws*, this is not tenderness. And therefore looseness of conscience is chiefly seen and discer'd in the commission and admission of such sins, without remorse or regard, which conscience and the fear of God should restrain, and are not punish'd by *humane laws*, or if so, do not easily or speedily come to *humane cognizance*.

3. Whence it follows, that looseness of conscience is most discover'd in secret sins, and consequently more discernible to a mans self then to another, till it break out into open enormities without open signs of a wounded or troubled soul.

4. That which some Divines call a *sleepy* or *dull* conscience, is but a farther degree of a loose conscience; for when men have *insured* themselves to sin against conscience, this (a) custome takes away quickness of sense. Yet is not a stupified conscience without some degree of feeling when God awakens it either with a *powerful word* Act. 2. 37. they were *pricked* in their heart, and said men and brethren what shall we do? or with a *powerful work*, as in *Pharaoh's case* Exod. 9. 27. I and my people are sinful. For as such who are *Letbargical* are not easily awakened, but by some *great noise*, so neither is a sluggish conscience without a powerful word or work of God.

(a) *Sed autem  
vincere & impre-  
care consuever-  
runt laboriosa-  
d difficultate su-  
perantur. Aug.  
de civ. Dei  
lib. 21. c. 16.*

5. The *feared* conscience seems to be the highest degree of a loose or wide conscience, Epb. 4. 19. who being past feeling, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 2. having their conscience seared with an hot iron. For as that which hath been *feared* feels nothing, so neither doth a *feared* conscience, till it feels hell fire; and it is commonly the effect of an hypocritical profession of the faith, or of a wicked departure from the faith.

6. The *cauterized* conscience as it is of the same species with a wide and loose conscience may be called *Cauterium eff*  
*a degree of it, yea the highest degree: as it proceeds corruptio in*  
*from loofness it may be an effect of it; as it increases carne per*  
*loofness and widens the conscience, it may be a cause grem, ex qua*  
*of it.* *egreditur con-*  
*tinua putredo.*

7. Of all the judgments of God in this life, it is the greatest to be given up to such a *feared*ness or *re-*  
*probate* sense. For however Desperation continued  
 in, cuts off from all mercy, yet is a *feared* conscience no less desperate, keeping off a fence of sin, and  
 therein any due sense of mercy. From which miserable estate the Lord deliver us.

Aquinas in  
 1 Tim. 4.

## C H A P. V.

### Of the difference of a tender conscience from other graces nearest and likeliest to it.

1. It thus differs from the fear of God, that this pro- (m) Job 1. 1.  
 perly respects the (m) future Jer. 32. 40. I will fear'd God and  
 put my fear into their heart, that they shall not de- eschewed evil.  
 part from me; but tenderness of conscience respects Quid hanc habet  
 as well the time past as the future. The fear of omnem edit  
 per hunc timorem Dei universa deserimus, mundo abrenuncianus, nosque ipsos (sicut  
 Dominus ait) abnegamus nobis. Bern. de don. sp. Sancti ser. 3. c. 1.

God

*Ecclesiastic. 1.*  
21. The fear  
of the Lord  
drives away  
sin.

*2 Cor. 7. 11.*  
that ye for-  
rowed after a  
godly sort  
what careful-  
ness is wrought  
in you.

God seems to be the cause of a tender conscience,  
*Gen. 39. 9.* how can I do this great wickedness and sin  
against God?

2. It differs from penitential contrition, as this re-  
spects actions past, but tenderness things also future; and  
(as in the former) contrition seems to be some cause  
of tenderness, the heart never being truly tender,  
till it be a broken and a contrite heart.

3. It differs from vigilancy, this being principally  
exercised about our temptations, and such other dan-  
gers, but tenderness about the good or evil of our  
actions.

4. It differs not only from a scrupulous conscience,  
but from a dubious; this hesitating betwixt assent  
and dissent, that firmly bent against any manifest  
evil.

## C H A P. VI.

### Of the quick sense of a tender con- science, being the formalis ratio of it.

A distinction  
somewhat like  
is in *Aristot.*  
*lib. 7 Ethic. c.*  
10. 'H abd zup  
ppbrunc dñ-  
ruxnū dñv n  
dñ vñrñs xñ-  
mn uñvov.  
Solum dicunt  
practicus, dum  
ad factibilias  
& agibilitas  
inferiora con-  
versatur. Ger-  
son.

1. This sensibility is a quick motion of the practical understanding in a sudden check of something done, or a sudden stop at something to be done.

2. The practical understanding is a power of the soul, which apprehends things in ordine ad opus, in order to some operation, as the speculative understand in ordine ad scientiam, in order to something to be known. For example, the speculative understanding considers of herbs, as having such virtues and operations in them, the practical, whether I should for such purposes use such simples, and in what manner to use them. The theoretical intel-  
lect

left considers of marriage as it is the ordinance of God, as a great mystery, as a means of the propagation of mankind : the practical intellect, considers of entering or refusing such or such a marriage. A Judge upon the Bench makes use of his theorick intellect, when he discourses of the Laws and Statutes what they allow or forbid ; he makes use of the practick power, when he examines and condemns malefactors by the law.

3. Whence it is a rule in Philosophy, *Intellectus theoricus conquisicit in notitia principiorum, intellectus practicus in notitia singularium.* Upon which is grounded the distinction of a (a) contemplative and an active life.

4. The quick motion of this practical understanding is imperated by the will truly sanctified, which lays a general charge upon all the faculties, above all things what ever they do to keep all sin out of the soul.

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*Cum magna horreus  
Quæ posse fieri non putas metus ramen.*  
Senec. trag. in OEdip.

(a) *Vita humana in actionem & contemplationem dividitur, quæ quidem attenditur secundum intellectum. Intellectus autem dividitur per activum & contemplatum. Aquin. 22. qu. 179. art. 2.;*

## CHAP. VII.

### Of the immediate object of a tender Conscience.

1. The object of this sensibility or tenderness, is about (b) doing or having done any thing which is clearly evil, and consequently of omitting or having omitted any thing which is truly good.

2. The absolute and primary rule of evil and good to a tender conscience, is the express and clear Word of God rightly understood ; for every thing in some particular

(b) *Conscientia est actus quo conscientiam nostram ad ea que agimus applicamus. Aqu. 1. part. q. 79. art. 13.*

particular places forbidden or commanded is not the rule.

3. I call Gods Word the *primary* and *absolute* rule, because other rules there are which bind the conscience, but they do it by the *virtue* of the *absolute* rule.

4. Those *secondary* rules of conscience, as some Divines both lately and formerly have noted, are  
 1. The Laws, Orders, and Mandates of our Superiors.  
 2. Our own spontaneous *vows* and *promises*.  
 3. The consideration of *offence* towards a weak Brother, which in some cases is a direction to conscience.

5. Whereas the late Reverend and Judicious Bishop *Sanderson* (who doth not deal in his Cases upon this my subject save only upon the rule of conscience in one place) asserts that the *Scripture* is not the *adequate rule* of conscience, but the *will of God* in what way soever revealed to men; that I may not seem to leave out any thing necessary to the definition of the rule, nor to thwart what that worthy Casuist hath written, I conceive I have both fully and fiely comprised all under those words, *The Word of God rightly understood*. For speaking only of the tender conscience of a *Christian*, and not a mere *natural* man, I have no occasion to take in the (a) law of nature by it self, as one way of revelation; there being nothing commanded or prohibited in the law of nature, which is not more *explicitely* and *excellently* to be found in the *Scripture*, which doth *eminently* contain in it the law of nature. And whereas extraordinary, particular, private revelations, are not to be *expunged*, but (b) suspected when pretended, I make them no certain part of the rule. But as to the way of revelation, which is by instructions and consequences drawn out of *Scripture*, I have

(a) Lex *vetus*  
*distinguitur*  
*a loge naturae*  
*non tanquam*  
*ab ea omnino*  
*aliena, sed*  
*tanquam ei*  
*aliquid super-*  
*addens. Sicut*  
*nim gratia*  
*presupponit*  
*naturam, sta-*  
*portet quod lex*  
*divina presup-*  
*ponat legem naturalem. Aquin. 12. qu. 99. art. 2.*

(b) Non dicat ideo verum esse — quia ille frater noster, vel illa soror nostra tale  
*nigum vigilans aut dormiens somniavit. Aug. de unitate ecclesiz.*

touched

couch'd it under these words : Rightly understood. For he that rightly understands a Text, knows the scope of it, and ~~he~~ <sup>that</sup> knows what that Text truly and properly teaches, by what means soever.

6. One of the secondary rules of evil and good to the conscience, is the *Laws* and *Mundates* of our Rulers and Governours ; these (a) bind by the power and virtue of the primary rule, 1 Pet. 2. 13. Submit your selves to every ordinance of man, for the Lords sake : *προς ἀρχὴν καὶ στοιχεῖαν* to every humane creature, as it sounds in the Greek. Estius thus, to every man being Gods creature, as Mark. 6. preach the Gospel to every creature, i. e. to every man ; yet as there is a restriction there to be understood, not to infants or distracted persons, so here is a restriction ; for we are not bound to submit to every man, but to such as are in authority. But Heinius a Protestant and a learned Critick, tells us, That it is very properly rendered to every humane ordinance. For the Hellenists Ecclesiasticus 38. 12. write thus ; *γί λαρησθεισιν τον* *καὶ ταπεινὸν θεον χειρον*, Give place to the Physician, for God hath ordain'd him. Though we use not the Apocryphal Books as a ground of faith, yet there are many excellent things in them ; and besides the Greek Apocrypha gives light to divers dark places in the New Testament, being a kind of Hebraizing Greek, and therefore to distinguish it from other Greek, called by Jof. Scsliger, and some other Criticks, the Hellenists Greek, as is also the LXX. of the Canonical Books in the Old Testament. Nor shall a man ever come to the true meaning of some of the darkest places of the New Testament, that is not well versed in the Hellenists. Another Text is in Rom. 13. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.

7. They therefore that are still opposing these subordinate rules one to another, submit to neither ; for

(a) *Omnis leges stativa potestas descendit à potestate supremā i. e. divina — quicquid igitur committitur contra legem humanam idem etiam sit contra legem ei. — Qui hoc etiam praecepit ut illi potestatis obediatur. — Non enim singuli potest prepiendi potestas sine obligacione obediendi. Tit. 3. 1. Estius in Sentent. lib. 2. dist. 36.*

*Pbi hoc jubet  
pater quod con-  
tra Deum non  
fit, sic audiens  
eis quomodo  
Deus quia obe-  
dire patri iussit  
Deus. Aug.  
cont. 1. in  
Psal. 70.*

*Quicquid rice  
Dei Prelatus  
principit, quod  
non sit certum  
displ. ere Doo,  
hanc secum ac-  
cipiendum,  
quam si practi-  
piat ipse Deus.*

*Ad secundum  
praeceptum (re-  
vius adterti-  
um) reducitur  
omnis r. olatio  
rati. Estius  
lib. 3. dist. 39.*

opposition is not to be made, but when man com-mands or ordains something contrary to the ordinance and commandments of God, and then the rule holds *Ad. 5. 19.* we ought to obey God rather than man: Or when men thrust out Gods laws, and place their own in their room, as *Mat. 15. 9.* They taught do-trines, the commandments of men, that is, they flant out the fifth Commandement, and brought in their Corban into the room of it, v. 4, 5, 6. Or lastly, when they shall bring in any thing as of God directly and immediately which is not, or as an essential part to his worship which he hath not prescribed. In which sense Tertullian is to be understood, *Nobis mi-  
bil ex nostro arbitrio indulgere licet, sed me eligere quod  
affiquis ex arbitrio suo indixerit.* Bern. de præcept. & disp. c. 12.

8. The second secondary rule of evil or good, is a lawful vow. This also binds by virtue of the abso-lute and primary rule. *Deut. 23. 21.* When thou shalt vow a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it. See *Psal. 76. 11. Eccles. 5. 4, 5. Ad. 5. 4.*

9. The third secondary rule is in case of offence, but it is, when the things are such as neither Gods Law nor Mans tyes us to : we having liberty to leave or use them *1 Cor. 8. 9.* But take heed this li-berty of yours become not a stumbling block to them that are weak.

## C H A P. VIII.

### Of the clearness of the primary rule;

1. **T**his rule I have asserted in the former Chapter to be the express and clear Word of God.
2. Those portions of Gods Word I call express and clear,

*clear*, which if they concern us that are Christians, are not obnoxious to divers interpretations or criticisme invalidating any certain sense.

3. Therefore where a text admis of divers probable interpretations, or is by critical observation carried beside the vulgar sense, there can be no rule of good or evil to the conscience.

4. The reason is, because that which becomes the true object of the speculative intellect, which searches what is true or false, cannot be the object nor rule of the practical intellect, till the speculative hath resolved it.

5. Note that I think the *sense* of the Canon-law applicable to this: *Quoniam substantia iis scriptis sunt ut intelligi non possum, pericula sunt et si scriptis non essent; because, however it be in mass Testament, in Gods Testaments, it is Scripture still, though the meaning be not certainly known.*

6. In places therefore dubious and difficult, it is not good sense to lay, my *conscience* tells me this or that is the sense of such a Text, because *conscience* is manifestly seated in the practical intellect, whose work is not to find out true or false in any matter.

7. Yet where the (a) *Church* hath authoritatively given the interpretation of dubious places, a tender conscience should be tender of rejecting it, as both charitably and dutifully hoping that the Church would not give an interpretation, either contrary to other express Scriptures, the Analogy of faith, or to the consent of the Universal Church in the most pure and ancient times of script. *Item* 200. *Item* 300.

Nor is it less then equity, that if the people trust the Church first in setting out the bounds of Canonical Scripture against such as would (b) add or (c) subtract: Secondly, in translating it against such *truis accedit — locus ex epistola ad Thessalonici, que sola genuina est, &c.* *Item* quoque *versus in altera epistola pauli ad Corinthus, que sub Paris nomine iam ultim vulgata est, &c.* Walo, Mellsinus (alias Salmamus) de Episcopis, & Presbyteris, and others besides him.

(a) But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken to me, Eze. 3.

(b) The Romantics.

(c) Si & Pe-

as would lock it up, they should also cheerfully and gratefully receive the Churches interpretation, it being not imaginable to an ingenuous and charitable man, that they who have been faithful and industrious in fixing the *Canon* and translating it, would be careless and deceitful in the *interpretation*.

9. I do therefore (but with humble submission to the judgment of the Church) affirm that a tender conscience being guided in her rule by the *Churches translation*, may also be gauided by *her interpretation*.

10. But besides *ambiguous* places there is *clear* Scripture enough to shew us what is good and what is evil. *Deut.* 30. 15. See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. But more pre-  
gnantly *Mic.* 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, &c.

11. Yet may *clear* places be obscured by *unsound interpretations*, and by none more then by over *large* and *large synecdoches*. For of all places, the moral law is most clear, yet are the synecdoches some make, so large, that a man knows not when he breaks them or keeps them.

12. Above the rest of the moral law, none seems more clog'd with the trope aforesaid, then *the second Commandment*. So that as they are guilty of one gross extrem, who expunge it out of the decalogue, so they in some degree of another, that have overmuch enlarged it. For if it must be extended to all *inventions of men*, whereby they cloath the worship of God with *fittng circumstantials*, we cannot stir a foot, but we must stumble over some graven image. Then is the tolling a Bell, the turning a Glass, the tuning a Psalm, or almost any thing else, not expressly commanded, a graven image. Then is every Christian Congregation in the world a Congregation of Idolaters, which is grossly absurd.

13. By what therefore hath been said in this and the former Chapters it is manifest, that the ob-  
ject

ject of the tender conscience is clear, or manifest evil or good.

14. Therefore bare resemblances of evil, are not the object of tenderness. Nor is that place *1 Tim. 5. 22.* Abstain from every appearance of evil, so to be understood. Because if that were the sense, mans life should be a *perpetual straldome*; *sicut also* is as well kind as appearance: and *Eustace* says well, it is the same with that (*b. 4. 12.*) to walk honestly towards them without: many good things carry a resemblance of evil, as diligence in callings of covetousness; cheerfulness of levity; reservedness of anger, lawful recreations of voluptuousness; and commonly all virtues and graces of some one extrem.

15. The restrictions are these. 1. It must be clearly evil of which it is an appearance. 2. Such an appearance it must be as doth necessarily inferre us guiltiness, or that we love or like that evil. 3. Such an appearance as we have freedome to forbear.

16. There is but one consideration more in the object, viz. that a tender conscience is conversant about the evil and good of our own actions, and not of other mens; for however grief may arise in our hearts for the misdoings of others, yet can it not be called trouble of conscience, but sorrow of mind: say not thine own, but of the others: *Vid. pag. viii. Gal. 6. 4.* But let every man prove his own work.

Yet is the  
tenderConsci-  
ence tender of  
another mans  
conscience,  
*1 Cor. 10. 19.*  
conscience I

## X. 9 AND C H A P. IX.

### Of the subject of a tender conscience.

The remote subject is (as hath been shewed) the practical intellect in the soul and the will, but more approximately, a regenerate and sanctified soul. For if the fear of God and true softness of heart, are only

only subjected in a regenerated soul, so likewise is this.

*Tis. 1. 15.* But to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

2. Tenderness therefore is not only the *adjunct* of such a soul, but the *adequate subject* of it, and therefore is reciprocated with the subject, so that there is no regenerate man without a tender conscience, no tender conscience but in a regenerate man, as it is a gracious disposition.

3. Hence it is as ridiculous for a wicked man as a thief, a perfidious person, or traitor, to pretend to tenderness of conscience, as for a beast to pretend to rationality. If two thieves should rob a man, and one persuade to murder him, and the other refuse and hinder, it is not tenderness of conscience properly in him, but either some degree of *good-nature*, or *God's restraining grace*, or fear of a divine hand of punishment, that frequently finds out murderers. Conscience is as truly tender of theft, as of murder, Gen. 37. 22. when Reuben said, *slid not Brodd*, it cannot be thought such a tenderness in him, who was not afraid to defile his father's bed.

4. To conclude this, the sanctified soul in regard of this adjunct, is not only *subjectum recipient ad se*, but *in se*. Tenderness hath an *inherence* in such a soul, and cannot be sever'd from it, how ever at some times it may be more dull than at others.

## C H A P. X.

### Of the adjuncts of a tender Conscience.

The adjuncts, properties, or the effects of this holy disposition will serve for the marks or characters of it by which it may in some sort be discovered where it is.

1. A proportionality to the object. The greater the evil, the more tender the conscience: Those evils especially it most checks us for and keeps us from, which are, 1. Most dishonorable to God and his Gospel. 2. Such as most wound the conscience. Those that most dishonour God and his Gospel, are sins against the *Laws of Nature, Nations, and Humane Society*, such as are breach of our faith and promises, (especially when it is publick) perjuries, and above all, treasons. In the late times, when men saw no punishment, but rather encouragement to all disloyalty, conscience should have restrained them, for the actions of those times were dishonourable to Christ in the sight of unbelievers, to the reformed religion in the sight of other professions, to the English Nation in the sight of all Nations. 2. The sins that most wound the conscience are breach of vows, oaths, when lawful for the matter, and imposed by lawful authority, such as the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy were, but the *Covenant was not*.

2. Tenderness is ever joined with a propensity to Gods publick worship. (a) I never in all my life knew a conscientious person, but did love Gods worship in his house, and the more conscientious the more constant in it and to it. (b) They that can sit at home without necessity whole Lords days, nay many months together, shew from the coldness of their affections to their God that their consciences are not tender but benumbed, or rather leared.

<sup>(a)</sup> Christiana libertas non est negotia & effra-  
nu licentia qua qui quid libet, pro no-  
stro arb' trio agamus aut omittamus sed est beratio

à maledictione legis, & a jugo legalium ceremoniarum per Christum. Beza Epist. 24.

<sup>(b)</sup> Is abicitur Christiana libertatis beneficio, vel potius adhuc renundatus est sub peccato, qui vel sui magistris vel re. propositi sponte non faret in Domino. Thed. Beza. ibid.

It is no argument, but a pitiful shift in too many to cover idleness, pride, disdain of the ministerial scientie permittendam esse? minimè ut hac quidem libertas intelligitur, i. e. quo quisque modo volat cum codas. Et enim hoc mere abducum dogma, finendum esse nonnunquam ut si volat pereat. Beza epist.

And after that King Nebu-  
chadnezzar had made him  
to swear by the name of the Lord he  
forsooke himself and re-  
belled. 1 Esdr. 1. 48.

office, and perhaps something worse, to say, I cannot come to Church : I understand not the meaning of such a ceremony, I approve not of such prayers, I like not the calling, gifts, or disposition of such a minister, I like not joining in assembly with profane persons.

Doctor Ames, a known enemy of the Church-government here, and something inclining to the New England mode, in his Book *de conscientia*, Chap. 4. speaks thus : If any through error of conscience should judge it unlawful to be present at the Church assembly, because he knows the Minister to be a bad man, and imagines he shall by his presence there partake with his improbity, he sins much more by keeping away, than by being present ; because it is a far greater sin to neglect the worship of God, than to communicate with another's improbity, except a man by being present were forced to commit idolatry. Thus Amesius.

*Si quis per conscientia errorem, illi citum judicaret interesset catu*s* ecclesie, cui ali*s* tenetur adesse, quia ministrum illum ecclesie improbum hominem esse novit, &*

*se communicaturum putat cum ejus improbitate, ille magis peccat abstinendo, quam si adesset, quia gravius est peccatum negligere cultum Dei quam communicare cum alterius improbitate personali in illo cultu. Ames. de confc. cap. 4.*

But no man in our assemblies is forced to practice or behold any such thing as idolatry. Nor doth he that is present where sinners are at Gods worship, communicate therefore with them in their sins, any more than by living in the same Parish with them. The ancient non-conformists were all of this judgment, and so are generally if not totally the Divines of the Presbyterian judgment at this day. Fearful no doubt is their sin, and so it will appear at the last day, to restrain Gods publick Ordinances upon such pretences ; much more upon pride, laziness, and hatred of Church-men and Church-government.

Atheists.

*1 Chron. 36.29.*

No greater contemners of God, than such as contention his publick worship and service, who give not unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, that bring not an offering, nor come before him to worship

ship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : Who worship not the Lord in his sanctuary, nor delight so *Psal. 29. 12.*  
give thanks to him in a great congregation or praise  
him among much people : more Atheism and con-

*Psal. 35. 18.*

tempt of the divine Majesty they cannot shew, except they should proclaim it in every Manner, or write it upon every Wall, that there is no God. And if it be not timously prevented, a deluge of *Hæthesism* and *Atheism* will quickly rush upon us. Divers there are that have not been at Church for many years, nor do they at all use or frequent the Sectarian Assemblies or any other, but sit at home following their own occasions. Others not so bad, come to the publick Assemblies, but very rarely, very inconstantly. Some come reasonable duly, but it is only as *bearers*, they never partake of the Lords Supper, though never so earnestly invited and persuaded ; they are so bold as to plead against it, as a thing needless and unprofitable ; they commonly urge the danger of unworthy participation, and the difficulty of self-examination as a reason of Non-Communion. They would make the world believe that Christ hath given some dangerous law to his Church, whose yoke is easy and burden is light. And some of this sort, the younger sort especially come (as by their carriage it appears) partly to gaze, to feed their wanton senses, to talk and discourse of vanities, even then whilst God is speaking to them in his Word ; yea, which is worse, to manifest and make known to all how little they regard the oracles of God : such an heap of libertinism have the late *Anarchical confusions* left still behind them. Insomuch that what with the Atheistical practises of some who own no Church ; the cold and loose dealing of others that own it at their leisure ; and the dividing practises of a considerable number who frequent none but such as are private ; the publick worship of God, the glory and strength, the beauty and security of a Nation is sadly eclipsed. But I hope it

1sa. 30. 20.

is *but in an eclipse*, and so will again recover. Lord let not the Gates of *Sion* mourn, which thou lovest more then all the dwellings of *Jacob* : If it be thy goodness to thy Church, that her Teachers shall not be removed into a corner, but her eyes shall behold them, it is no less, that her people shall not remove into corners, but that her Teachers eyes shall behold their people.

I deny not but such may be the Churches exigency, as that she may for some time and in some degree, bear with such as are erroneous and scrupulous, when it is for the good and safety of the sound part of the Church ; but this I presume not to deal upon. All that I presume to say ( and none can blame me for it ) is this : They that own our rule, but not our principles and discipline, have less to plead for their separation ; and they that own both our rule, principles and discipline, have nothing to plead ; abhorring Sectarian principles, yet shrowding themselves under their practices.

Atheists and  
Libertins.

3. However such a conscience is tender of all divine laws, yet is it in a more peculiar and remarkable manner tender of Christ's new and great Commandement of Love, and consequently of his injunction so earnestly and frequently inculcated by the Apostle, to beware of making *Schisms, Divisions, and Separations*. He hath no tender conscience that is not tender and fearful of making breaches and parties in the Church of God.

4. A tender conscience is tender of another man's conscience. Some that former years professed tenderness about *White Garments*, about Kneeling and Standing Gestures, &c. when they had got the power into their own hands, had no mercy on the consciences of their brethren that had a thousand times more cause to be tender and wary of taking the *Covenant* rendered me so soon as Printed, and upon my absolute refusal, to be exiled from my Flock, March 2. 1643. and put to sad exigencies.

It was mine  
own lot to  
have the Co-  
venant rendered me so soon as Printed, and upon my absolute refusal, to be ex-  
iled from my Flock, March 2. 1643. and put to sad exigencies.

nant

uant; but they who had strained at the former *gratis*, did not only swallow the *Covenant Camel*, but did endeavour to cram and ram it down the throats of their brethren, *wrenching open* their jaws with the cold and *barb* key of poverty and ruin; and which was worse, making such scandalous that should refuse it, how *unwarrantable* soever from the imposers and composers, how *unsuitable* soever for the matter to sound and sworn principles, and how *pernicious* soever in the ends and effects of it.

5. It is tender of both Tables of the Law. If it will not admit of profaneness, neither will it of unrighteousness. If it be tender of an idle and vain oath, it is no less of detraction; if of neglecting the Sabbath, so also of neglecting the Poor; if it abhors Idols, which are a breach of the first Table, it abandons Sacrilege, which is a breach of both Tables.

6. It is troubled if it hath admitted any thing against the clear rule, be it never so little, be it but in a thought, *Dent.* 15. 9. Beware there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, *Isa.* 35. 4. He is of a fearful heart, *Eccle.* 10. 20. Curse not the King, <sup>2 Cor. 8. 20.</sup> *no* not in thy thoughts. They dare not let any spot of guilt cleave to them; Their conversation shews they do exercise themselves to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards Men, *Ad.* 24. 16.

7. Above all men to be void of offence towards the Magistrate. He is not apt by any intemperate speeches, much less, otherwise to fly upon the Law or the Magistrate, yet though they should require what he cannot do. His prayers are as many for him, his good speeches as frequent of him, and his fidelity as great towards him, as if he had never received any difficult law from him. He translates those preceps out of *OEconomicks* into *Politicks*, which are given us *Eph.* 6. 3. *Col.* 3. 22. 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. He bears weekly the will and suffers weekly the anger of the Magistrate.

Avoiding this,  
that no man  
should blame  
us, &c.

*Duae sunt  
conscientia &  
fama. propter  
nos conscientia  
nostra nobis  
sufficit: pro-  
pter alios fama  
necessaria est:  
conscientiabitibz,  
fama; proximo.  
August. Serm.  
priore de vita  
com. suorum  
clericorum.*

To what he may yield he is the forwarder if he cannot yield to every thing. He is full most tender of provoking God, and aye of provoking Gods Vicar. It is the grief of his soul if he cannot come up to every thing the Magistrate expects of him.

8. He is willing to be inform'd, and to hear what may be said. As he is tender of doing any thing contrary to his judgment, so is he tender of judging contrary to the truth. He is not self-willed, but will hear what may be said against his way and his interest. Eli knew Samuel had a sharp message, yet says he, God do so to thee, and more also if thou hide, &c. 1 Sam.

## 3. 17

9. He is not apt to be censorious, he considers that a good man may fall by temptation, and he rejoices not at the fall of his brother, Prov. 24. 16. A just man falls seven times a day, v. 17. rejoice not when thine enemy falls. He scoffs not at, nor triumphs over his enemy much less his neighbour and friend when he is down, but seeks his restoring, considering himself lest he also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1.

10. Conscientia temet non est temeraria. In doubtful cases it will seek and ask for information before it acts; though it is not scrupulous, it is wary, considerate and watchful; it takes counsel concerning the ways of God in Gods way, it goes to the Law and to the Testimony, Isa. 8. 20. and if it want understanding in that, it goes to the Interpreter, Job 33. 23. to the Priest, whose lips should preserve knowledge, at whose mouth they should seek the Law; if he cannot satisfie, it inquires what the Church in her Synods and Councils hath universally determin'd; not building its faith on the Church, which is built upon the foun-  
See for this Ecclesiast. 6.  
33—36 and ch. 8. 8, 9.  
it self, Mat. 16. but in doubtful cases, abusing publick interpretation before private, and acquiescing therein, though not as a ground of faith, yet as the safest and probable means of knowledge and information.

*Gal. 2. 13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, in so much that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation*

*Seek ye out of the books of the Lord and read. I Jn. 3. 16.*  
*Mat. 2. 7.*

*See for this Ecclesiast. 6.  
33—36 and ch. 8. 8, 9.*

These

These are the subjects and properties of a true tender conscience.

*But all this while what shall we say to a doubting conscience? Rom. 4. 23. He that doubteth is damned or judged if he eat, because whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

A dubious conscience is somewhat like a tender conscience, though not the same with it. Answ. 1.

It is observable, the things the Apostle speaks of, are matters of religion and not about civil matters. So that if a man should doubt in civil matters, this Text will give no sure footing for forbearance upon doubting; as if a man should doubt whether he might lawfully undertake the office of a Constable or Headborough, or whether he might pledge his friend when he drinks to him, or in a thousand instances more.

The Apostle doth not instance in things clearly evil or good, but such as at that juncture of time, betwixt the setting of the Law and the dawning of the Gospel were dark and somewhat doubtful, as about the Jewish meats and festivals, yea, were in respect of express and clear good, not considerable; and therefore says, that the kingdom of God is now, i.e. doth not so much value eating on fastbearing meats or drinks, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: the Apostle therefore making a clear distinction, betwixt things uncertainly good and things absolutely good; I say, those things that he hath pronounced let no man joyn together, as if they were the same matter of doubt, as to what is to be done or done.

Therefore if any shall be so blind as to say, let a thing be never so good that is required of me; if I be not perswaded it is good, I may not do it; let it be never so evil, if I do it, persistently, I would do it, I must; they have no ground from the Apostles doctrine, who only speaks of doubtful meats and

Question.

Answ. 2.

Answ. 3.

Answ. 4.

and days which he distinguishes from manifest good,  
vers. 17.

Thou hast de-  
spised my ho-  
ly things, and  
hast profaned  
my Sabbath,  
*Eze. 22. 8.*

If therefore the thing be *clearly good*, as to receive the holy Supper, to joyn in publick prayer, to hear the holy Word read, interpreted and applied, though the conscience should kick at these good things expressly commanded (which surely must need be some *strange fashion'd extick conscience*) yet are we bound to perform the aforesigned duties, or any other of the like nature.

Answ. 5.

In like manner we may say, if the thing be expressly evil, as to Worship an Image, to Forswear ones self, to Rob my Neighbour, to Lye with my Sister, to Kill my Brother, though conscience should urge me to any of these or the like, I may not do them.

Reaf. 1.

Because, else we set conscience above God, which is a breach both of the first and second Commandments *i Job. 3. 20.* God is greater then our conscience. Conscience must not regulate the Word of God, but that must regulate the conscience.

Reaf. 2.

It is an undoubted rule, *Nulle est obligatio ad illisita.* Gods law obliges not to sin, therefore conscience which is to be ruled by that, must not. Errour is a sin, and how can it bind? And if we are bound to lay down error of judgement, then also error of conscience, both being part of the old man to be put off *Eph. 4.22.* as is observed both by *Ametius* and *Pekins.*

Reaf. 3.

If men should plead never so much satisfaction of conscience to do the forementioned evils, or forbear the good aforesaid, yet every man hath in him so much certainly of the law of nature, and every Christian probably so much of the knowledge of the Word, that they can neither do the evil or forbear the good without *reluctancy*, so that conscience in such cases if pleaded is but a fond and weak pretence.

Reaf. 4.

Grant but this allowable, what good may not be omitted? All the ordinances of God may lye unfre-  
quented

questioned and disused, neglected and affronted, Yea what mischiefs may not be acted upon pretext of conscience? One neighbour may plunder, pillage, yea, and murder another upon this pretext; Servants may make away their Masters goods & them too; Children may butcher their Parents, and which is more, Subjects their King; what (a) villanies and outrages were they that were not committed of later years upon pretence of conscience and reformation? and upon those tragical actings how well did the words of the Poet agree to us?

But blessed be God, I may say what he adds, *τοι περι αχινων ιανουας.*  
(a) *Et quando uberior visiorum copia?* Juvenal Satyf, r.

— *Quod mare nam Anglicz,  
Non decoloravere cedes?  
Qua caret Ora cruento nostro?*

Mor. lib. 2.  
o. i.

If the thing be not forbidden by God, but lawful Answ. 6.  
or not evil but indifferent, if the Magistrate command  
it to be done, though we know not the good or the  
end of the ordinance, the conscience is bound to  
yield to it; otherwise we take away from the Ma-  
gistrate the power of making laws and ordinances,  
and give him only a power to confirm them that are  
made already in Scripture contrary to 1 Pet. 2. 13.  
prohibentur--- Beza epist. 24. ad fratres peregrinarum ecclesiarum in Anglia.

If the Magistrate make a law about meats, which  
are in themselves and so acknowledged by him to be  
but indifferent, let it be out of civil ends for the good  
of the commonwealth, or out of religious ends, viz.  
charitably and christianly to comply with the ancient  
Churches of Christ, however a subject may plead mat-  
ter of health or want, yet the plea of conscience in  
this case is unwarrantable and ridiculous.

*Etsi consciencias proprias  
laws Deum ligat:  
tamen quatenus vel magis  
stratus qui Dei  
minister est iudicat non esse  
reipublica, ut  
quippam alio  
qui pro se licitum non habet: vel Ecclesia ordines & decori adeque adiunctionis rationem  
habens, leges aliquas de rebus mediis rite condit, illa leges a p[ro]p[ri]is omnino sunt observan-  
da.* Beza ibid.

Answ. 7.

1 Cor. 8. 8.

*Liges Magistratus, ratione conscientia ligunt ut nemo sciens & prudens rebellans animo, possit absque periculo vel facere quae ea prohibentur, vel omiscentur quae sic precipiantur. Beatis ibid.*

Answ. 8.

1 Cor. 10. 29.

*Nulla ratione committere debeo, nec occasio-  
nem dare ut alium erroneam & infirmam  
habens conscientiam, Iudicet, i. e. dam-  
net libertatem meam qua possum indiffe-  
renter quidvis odere Eritis in locum.*

If the thing be lawful in it self, and indifferent as meats are, and no obligation from the Government lies upon me, I am then left to follow the light of mine own conscience, and to take care I do nothing against mine own persuasion, for of such things are the Apostles instances, and not of things commanded by God or man, or forbidden.

If the thing be lawful and indifferent, both in regard of Gods law, or mans law, and in the persuasion of mine own conscience, so that I think I may use it or not use it, do it or not do it, and have no tye any of those g. ways, either from God, Man, or my Self, I must then look next to the Apostles rule concerning offences. 1. Not judge or despise him that is not just of my persuasion, Rom. 14. 3. 2. Not lay a stumbling block in our brothers way, vers. 13. Nor to give him occasion to think ill of me. 3. Not to grieve or afflict our brother with our liberty, vers. 25. 4. Not to occasion any strangling or disputing, but rather to forbear that, how lawful soever that may occasion it, v. 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another, Gal. 5. 13. For brethren ye have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

*Domine Deus, da nobis ceteriter endire, frequenter legere, diligenter attendere, recte intelligere, tutto agere, bene & inculpare vivere, per Jesum Christum Dominum & salvatorem nostrum. Amen.*

